

## Azerbaijan Connections and Exchange Program

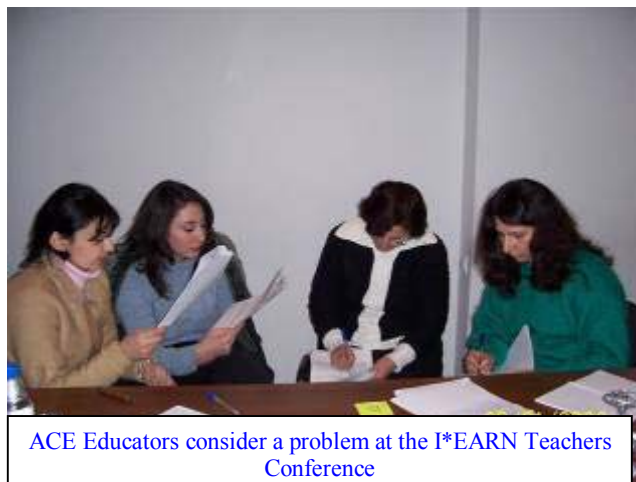


# NEWSLETTER



Winter 2005-06

### Educators Prepare for ACE Sustainability through I\*EARN Workshop



ACE Educators consider a problem at the I\*EARN Teachers Conference

Through the ACE program, Project Harmony and Junior Achievement have served as the I\*EARN Coordinators in Azerbaijan since 2004. In that time, the 72 ACE affiliated schools have participated in a wide range of I\*EARN activities and been exposed to the cultures of partner schools around the world. On January 25, 2006 ACE organized an I\*EARN program workshop for ACE teachers, funded by OSI which followed upon and continued the training of the I\*EARN workshop conducted by ACE in May 2004. The workshop trained 15 English Teachers from Baku, Sumgayit, Ganje, Mingechevir and Lankaran on NGO creation, project planning, project proposal writing and working with donors to continue the

great work with I\*EARN these teachers have been able to do through the ACE program. The workshop also included a presentation of the Deliberation in Democracy (DID) program, conducted by OSI that supports the Civic Education component of the ACE program.

The first day of the workshop, two trainers from Lankaran taught participating teachers the Project Planning Method: Applied Planning and Assessment in which the educators determine projects for their ICC's to assist in the sustainability of their Centers, define possible challenges during project implementation, and list them according to priority in order to find the most appropriate solutions. The participants also learned about project indicators, SWOT analysis and project text format.

The second day of the training began with a presentation of the DID program which included information about the lesson plans and discussion topics. After the presentation, the educators participated in a sample lesson, the goal of which was to demonstrate how classroom discussions and online forums on topical issues help students learn to express their opinions, improve their critical thinking skills and see all sides of an issue.

This workshop is one of many ways in which ACE has worked with OSI and the I\*EARN program to further international education in Azerbaijan.

## **Ismayilli Teachers Expand the Reach of ACE through Regional Conference on ICT in Education**

In December, Ismayilli School #1 and the Regional Educational Department of Ismailli organized a conference devoted to “Communication and Computer Technologies in Teaching Foreign Languages” in Ismailli School #1. During the conference the educators shared the knowledge gained from working with the Azerbaijan Connections and Exchange Program (ACE). In his opening speech, Shafagat Rasulov, the principal of Ismailli School #1, focused on the key role of communication technologies in education, particularly in teaching English. Mr. Rasulov’s teachers have been among the most active in the ACE network and currently are participating in The Global Classroom with a school from Belfast, Maine and in the Global Education Initiative’s Water Purification Project, an ACE project conducted in collaboration with the GEI Ford Foundation. In June, nine teachers from the school also participated in ACE’s conference “Azerbaijan’s Virtual Schoolhouse.” According to Mr. Rasulov, “Azerbaijan’s Virtual Schoolhouse” was just the beginning of a continuing dialog about how new educational technologies can be employed to support a child’s learning. Ismayilli School #1 is certainly at the forefront of this dialog with their work on international projects and Internet resource creation.

Following the director’s opening remarks, some of the educators demonstrated their success with using computer technologies in the classroom. Shukufa Najafova, English teacher, presented the Global Classroom international partnership project, initiated by Mr. Michael Bailey, geography teacher, and Greg Applestein, world literature teacher from Belfast, Maine. The Global Classroom gives Azerbaijani students an opportunity to study in Bailey and Applestein’s interdisciplinary World Geography class with their American counterparts. “Besides learning geography and literature,” underlined Ms. Najafova, “students get the opportunity to speak English with native speakers.” In the second part of her presentation, Ms. Najafova talked about macro-language empowered Power Point applications used to create interactive tests for teaching English. With the help of Saadat Atakishiyeva, tenth-grade student, she demonstrated samples of tests Najafova created during Project Harmony’s 2005, online summer training on ICT for advanced teachers (<http://edu.ace-az.org/english/shukufa.ppt>)

Other highlights of the conference included Aziza Iskandarova’s presentation on the use of Internet resources in the classroom via PowerPoint software. She demonstrated a lesson plan, which brings The Library of Congress into the classroom. Vafa Babayeva, English teacher, demonstrated how to integrate Civic Education into the teaching of English in the framework of project based learning. Amy Petersen, United States Peace Corps Volunteer, who worked in Ismailli School #1, shared her ideas on “Modern Education: the effective use of computer technologies in education.” Humay Talibova, an English teacher from neighboring School #3, presented INSETT (In Service Teacher Training) program.

Rasim Orujov, the Head of the Ismailli Regional Educational Department, in his closing remarks thanked participants for doing a great job for students and the educational system’s benefit. At the end of the conference Hafiz Karimov, Chairman of the Educational Department’s Union in Ismailli, presented awards and certificates to Shukufa Najafova, Aziza Iskandarova, Vafa Babayeva, Amy Petersen and Humay Talibova.

One thing that is certain from Ismayilli’s “Communication and Computer Technologies in Teaching Foreign Languages” conference is that the impact ACE is making on teachers and students is felt beyond the schoolhouse and into the broader structures of Azerbaijan’s education system. Moreover, Ismayilli is not alone in its desire to share knowledge of computer and Internet technologies. The Ministry of

Education itself, to whom Mr. Orujov sent a video of the conference, has made major strides in the last few years toward the goal of expanding the benefits of employing ICT in classrooms

## **Global Classroom Expands to Zakatala through ACE**

During the fall 2005 ACE was approached by the Gymnasium of the Humanities in Zakatala, Azerbaijan. The English teacher and Teachers' Resource Center Coordinator at the school, Yetar Muradova, had hosted American teacher Michael Bailey when he visited Azerbaijan with the Teachers' Excellence Awards (TEA) funded by the US State Department. Mr. Bailey, geography teacher, and his colleague Greg Applestein, world literature teacher from Belfast, Maine have worked with the ACE program since 2004 to bring Mr. Bailey's and Mr. Applestein's multidisciplinary Global Classroom (<http://www.sad34.net/~globalclassroom>)

to students in Azerbaijan and Russia.

Through the coordination of ACE Ms. Muradova, Masuma Afandiyeva, school principal, and Bahar Ismailova, computer instructor and three students were able to join the Global Classroom and become a part of the network of Azerbaijani schools who include international education into their curriculum. "We're very fortunate to join the project," Muradova said, "Our students and teachers are very happy that they have the opportunity to share opinions and increase sensitivity to cultural differences and develop a deepened awareness of shared human values." The teachers in Zakatala see the importance of the Global Classroom for helping students develop much needed critical thinking skills important for a global citizen. Muradova noted, "Communicating with students around the globe on topical subjects, our students can develop intellectual and participatory skills. It is a chance for them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the world and to evaluate, take and defend positions on relevant contemporary issues."

During the upcoming semester the Global Classroom will cover such topical subjects as, "Can the Middle East Find Peace?" and "Should Europe Expand and Unite?"



## **ACE Teachers Partner to Create Global Citizens**

In October, ten Azerbaijani teachers had the opportunity to attend a workshop on participating in Civic Education based international partnerships. Those teachers then went on to put theory into practice, by involving their students in the first of a four-project civic education curriculum. As a part of the curriculum, the students from Azerbaijan and the United States posted six things that best represent their last sixty years. The project is designed to provide the students a first look at their partners through the decisions about what best represent their countries. Some of the notable choices students made to represent their countries include: In 1956 Azerbaijan's television station began working; Martin Luther King, Jr., followed the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Camcorders were introduced in this time period, now making it able for people to make home videos of their children and other family events.

The current project will be followed by *Boomtown Democracy* in which the American and Azerbaijani students work together to form a government for their boomtown; Tolerance and Respect for Diversity, which has the students look at their lives and how they can heighten the level of tolerance in society, *An*

*Ideal Government, an Ideal Ruler*, which teaches the students to think about what an ideal ruler is for the government they wish to have.

## **ACE Students from Around Azerbaijan become Experts on Water Purification and Environmental Protection**

Beginning September 22, 2005, eight teachers and forty eighth, ninth and tenth grade students from Ismayilli School #1, Baku School #181, Lankaran Schools #5 and #10 participated in the four-month international project “Water Purification and Ecosystem Preservation.”

In the project the youth are virtual business owners of an International Water Engineering Firm with the partners and offices in Azerbaijan, Armenia, India, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United States. Their International Water Engineering Firm has been virtually hired by the United Nations World Health Organization and their National Ministries of Health and Education to research, develop and present an international water purification and ecosystem preservation project. The Youth elected officers and selected the name of their firm. They worked collaboratively and joined one business research committee to develop their Water Purification and Ecosystem Preservation Business Plan. The participating teachers gave weekly lessons where the students gained Microsoft Word and Power Point skills to



Azerbaijani Students' GEI Certificate

research and develop their Business Plan, which included: a business section, water/science section, six major ecosystems, science principles of the onsite ecosystem the youth constructed and recommendations to preserve and protect an endangered ecosystem.

The GEI Ford program provided participating schools with materials including the weekly lesson plans, and charts. Azeri youth, who were a part of the international team The Starblazers, named their firm “Society of Ocean Savers.” In the third week the president of the Azerbaijani firm, Leyla Ismayilova sent Weekly reports to the Starblazer team. During the lessons the students demonstrated their research and English skills. The Azeri youth joined their international partners for online board meetings on October 22, 2005 and November 19, 2005.



Ismayilli youth, teacher and Peace Corps Volunteer work on GEI Business Plan

The students were joined by Dr. Science for the October 22 International Youth Water Testing Workshop. In the workshop, the international guest, environmentalists and youth began their water testing experiments. The youth analyzed Water Temperature, turbidity, PH factor and dissolved oxygen of the water samples they had collected. Onsite instructors were asked to collect four water samples in four labeled, non-breakable bottles, and the water samples had to be collected as close to October 22 as possible. After testing their water samples, the students were able to challenge Dr. Science with three questions on the Water Section and three on Ecosystem Section. The next online International Youth Workshop was held on November 19 where the students selected a mission statement, a name for their international firm, a background for their Power Point Presentations and a design for the cover page of their Business Plan. During both International Workshops Azeri youth collaborated with the youth from Alamosa Middle School, Alamosa, CO, Dallas, TX, Owerri Digital Village, Nigeria, and AGN School, India.

After the workshops the youth continued working on their Business Plan to be completed December 5. The GEI Ford program made an abbreviated version of the Business Plans and sent them back to youth. On December 8 Azerbaijani youth joined International Youth Presentation.

Two instructors Amy Peterson (Peace Corps Volunteer and teacher in Ismayilli school #1) and Ulviyya Tahirova (biology teacher of the same school) facilitated the presentation from the Azerbaijani side. After the Azeri youth finished their presentation, the judges questioned them about their Business Plan. January 13, 2006, the judges announced that the Azerbaijani youth had won the Star Scientists Award for their project.

The Azerbaijani youth's Business plans are currently available at [www.ace.az/gei](http://www.ace.az/gei), a website created by Lankaran school #5 students. The Business Plans of schools from the other countries participating in the Project will soon also be placed on the website.